The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

They can conquer who believe they can.—Dryden.

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WHOLE NO. 932. WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1929. FRANK MORRISON, Secretary VOL. 18, NO. 49.

LAW, NOT EQUITY, SHOULD CONTROL HUMAN BEINGS

"It seems to me that labor is pretty well privileged. A strike can ruin an employer, but he hasn't any remedy."

To illustrate his point, Judge Bruce said that the railroads could be enjoined if they refuse to transport milk to Chicago.

There is no comparison between a human being and a corporation. The first has inherent rights, the latter possesses only those rights that the state gives it.

A corporation is an impersonal thing. It is a legal fiction. The state gives it life for a specific purpose. If it is a public utility the specific purpose is to serve the public and it is assured a reasonable return for that service.

If such a corporation refuses to carry out the purpose for which it was created, it can be enjoined.

Only a rash legalist would compare a corporation with persons who have combined for a lawful purpose and who should not be compelled by an injunction judge to labor against their will.

Judge Bruce's statement that "a strike can ruin an employer, but he hasn't any remedy," is significant.

Is the fear of ruining an employer a defense for unjust conditions? Any observing people, outside the ranks of labor, hold that an industry that can not afford living conditions has no right to exist.

Does Judge Bruce want government aid, via the labor injunction, to uphold such an industry? Would he deny employes the right to cease work? If he does, he flouts the Thirteenth Amendment, as does every labor injunction judge.

Would he throw his protecting mantle around industry that is wiped out by competition, by monopoly, and by new processes?

Would he, for instance, enjoin auto manufacturers from injuring wagon and harness makers? Or rayon manufacturers from harming the silk industry?

Such a position, of course, is illogical, but the labor injunction is illogical.

Under this system wage workers are merely an adjunct to industry and whenever this "adjunct" becomes restless government by law is sidetracked and one-man government is set up to control the situation.

The labor injunction denies fundamental rights to the worker, if his employer is liable to lose customers or income.

The injunction judge ignores every social wrong—he is only interested in profits. Profit, real and imaginary, he calls these "property," and has evolved a system of reasoning that gives the employer a first mortgage on the patronage of customers.

This reasoning only applies when workers are involved. Otherwise the employer would be laughed at if he asked for an injunction to protect his business. He would be told he must accept the laws of competition and acknowledge human rights.

Lincoln Had Faith In People; Ever Defended Labor Rights

Cincinnati, Feb. 16.—"Lincoln represents all that is democracy to a freedom-loving people," said William Green, president A. F. of L., in an address to the Traffic Club, on the anniversary of the Emancipator's birthday.

"Lincoln had sublime faith in the people and in their capacity for self-government," said Mr. Green. "His keen concept of the just, equitable and fair relationship which should exist between the essential producing factors in industry is reflected in his addresses, published articles and state papers. Because of his nature and his environment he was sympathetic toward labor and partial in his attitude toward the masses of the people.

"The Old World was watching our experiment in popular government. Outside of our Republic it was generally assumed that only those who enjoyed wealth, favors and privilege were equipped to rule, to direct and to govern. Lincoln challenged that assumption in a speech in this city on February 21, 1861, when he declared that 'working men are the basis of all government.'

"Our history proves Lincoln was right. Workers have shown their capacity for self-government and have proved to be a loyal and protecting force in every crisis through which the nation has passed."

President Green called attention to a few of Lincoln's historic declarations, which include:

"Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration.

"I am glad to see that a system of labor prevails in New England under which laborers can strike when they want to, where they are not obliged to work under all circumstances and are not tied down and obliged to labor whether you pay them or not."

President Green urged his audience to accept Lincoln's conclusions on the rights of labor, and labor's present-day demand that the right of collective bargaining be acknowledged.

Textile Industry Being Wrecked; Unity Must Replace Competition

New York, Feb. 16.—Old theories in the textile industry are shattered and unity by mill owners must replace strangling competition, declared Thomas F. McMahon, president of the United Textile Workers.

Elimination of waste and greater output, as a remedy for existing conditions, were classed as "nonsensical."

The competitive idea, said Mr. McMahon, is that higher cost mills will cease operation when prices fall to a non-profit point, and then, the relation of demand to supply will adjust itself.

"Unfortunately, in actual practice it does not work out this way, owing to the fact that, for a short time, it is less expensive to operate at a loss than to close down altogether and owning to the fact that the fuller you operate, the lower your costs will be. So that the situation of falling prices, instead of acting as a check, is a stimulus to the losing mill to produce more. Prices are slaughtered as a consequence.

Mr. McMahon said that the absence of order in manufacturing and marketing "is the natural and inevitable outcome of unlimited competition when the productive capacity of an industry is in excess of what its market can absorb."

"If the industry is to survive as a steady outlet for the employment of labor, the competitive era must give place to a new era of cooperation between manufacturers.

"To trust to the elimination of waste, lower costs, more modern systems of merchandising, styling, etc., as a cure for such a situation seems nonsensical. At best they facilitate the theft of a competitor's customer by underselling, which in turn invites a price war that is usually accepted.

"A reasonable and profitable price is impossible with excessive output and unlimited competition. The latter must be abandoned and some form of competition among producers established."

SILK WORKERS' WAGE DROPS TO PAUPERISM

New York, Feb. 16.—Maximum wages in many silk mills in the Scranton (Pa.) district, range from $9 to $13 a week, according to Mary Kelleher, organizer United Textile Workers.

There are no two mills in that district that pay the same rate. The 50-hour week prevails, speeding-up is the rule and the silk is often of such a poor grade that it is impossible for workers to keep the ends running.

"Recently a silk manufacturer was quoting the cheap wage paid in the South," said Miss Kelleher. "I told him I knew something about wages and working conditions of Southern workers and that China is the only place he can secure cheaper labor than he already has."

LONG HOUR EMPLOYERS STUNG BY LABOR HEAD

Washington, Feb. 16.—Secretary of Labor Davis warned a group of box board manufacturers that they must substitute the eight-hour day and eliminate Sunday work. This is the third conference of these manufacturers, who agreed to humane conditions, only to ignore their promise.

Secretary Davis scored "the greed and avarice" of these business men.

"If a minority of you persist in wrecking the whole industry by refusing to heed our appeal, there is still an arm of the government authorized to deal with such matters and deal with them most effectively," he said.

"You do not want to be investigated by the Federal Trade Commission, but it will come—and come as sure as fate—so long as you run your industry by the law of the jungle.

"Thirteen hours a day is fearful. Possibly your employees have worked 13 hours a day. I have myself, years ago. But in this enlightened day we do not want others to do it because we did it. Except in emergencies, there is not a particle of necessity for it.

"If you people are worried, it is your own bad management that brings you the worry. You richly deserve it. Business, as you know it, must be a repetitive grind or signing notes and the nonsensical part of it is that you yourselves have within your grasp a way of ending this demoralization."

NEW PROBLEM FOR LABOR

Only a complacent, non-thinking citizen will overlook the revolution now on in industry.

Attention is again called to this silent upheaval by a new process which will turn out as much iron in 30 minutes as 350 puddlers can turn out in an entire day.

The ancient skill of these refiners of iron is destroyed and they are thrown on the streets.

The self-satisfying claim that workers can enter other industries will not suffice. The "other" industries are also victims of the same revolution.

Even such unskilled callings as road making and sewer digging is being done by the machine.

Many of these workers, it is pointed out, are operating gas service stations and hot dog stands, but this is not creative labor. It is no solution to turn the nation's wage workers into parasites.

We are yet at the threshold of the automatic-machine age. Inventors and scientists are ceaseless in their efforts to develop machinery and processes that will dispense with human labor power.

With workers displaced, and their purchasing power destroyed, who will buy the machine-made commodities?

The situation presents startling possibilities. Old theories must be rejected as a new age dawns.

If workers are far-sighted they will prepare for the near future by joining the trade union movement.

If they fail, grim necessity will force them to act that unemployment insurance, old-age pensions and a shorter work-week may be assured.

HIGHER POST OFFICE WAGE ABSORBED BY MORE OUTPUT

Washington, Feb. 16.—"The cost per unit in the post office is less today than when low salaries prevailed," said Congressman Clyde Kelly, in making a favorable report from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads on a bill that would provide the 44-hour week in the postal service.

Congressman Kelly agreed that wages have increased, but he quoted post office reports to show that workers are producing more at a less cost. In 1921 the man power per each $1,000,000 of revenue was 165 men, working day and night. In 1927 the man power per each $1,000,000 revenue dropped to 126 men, employed eight hours a day.

"These figures, furnished by the Post Office Department," said Mr. Kelly, "show a substantial reduction in the cost of producing revenue. Today it costs $133,000 less to produce the million dollars in revenue than it did in 1921. In other words, the increased cost in salaries has been more than absorbed by increased efficiency in the service."

EXPERIENCE IS BEST EDUCATOR; TRADE UNIONISTS URGED TO ACT

By GUSTAVE GEIGES

President American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers

There is no better way of educating oneself in the practical problems of psychology, sociology, economics, publicity, public speaking and a host of other subjects than to engage in real work of organization. The intelligently conducted agitation for improved conditions and better relations in industry is the most effective form of mass education we can engage in today.

Our principal job first, last and all the time is to organize the unorganized. Practically everything we do is, or should be, a means to that end.

We must put new fire and zeal into this work, because each year we see more clearly that the only practical possibility we have of meeting the newer problems of large scale production is through complete organization of all key industries.

We can not master the problems of the machine treatment of workers by machinery unless we have organization. We can not do anything useful about the problems of unemployment, seasonal unemployment, child labor, night work and the danger of southern competition.

STOCK MARKET PANIC AIDED BY UNCLE SAM

Washington, Feb. 16.—The Federal Reserve Board's notice that banks must cease using funds for speculative purposes shows how government officials can change front.

Senator La Follette, last year, introduced a resolution along the same lines that the reserve board now takes. Financiers laughed and newspaper editors joined in the merriment over this lawmaker's assumption.

Governor Young of the Federal Reserve Board told the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency that lending money to brokers is "a legitimate credit function."

The resolution was forgotten and the banks continued to loan millions of dollars. Stocks in Wall Street soared sky high, interest on loans for legitimate business increased 20 to 50 per cent and feverish speculation swept the nation.

The Federal Reserve Board became alarmed and in a statement that was far more emphatic than the La Follette resolution banks were warned that drastic action would be taken. The stock market collapsed in one of the wildest days in its history. Millions of profits were wiped out and terrified managers of the stock market closed operations for a day that the wreckage could be cleared.

Senator La Follette's prediction has been verified, but the "wise" financiers will learn no lesson, even though they are forced to acknowledge he was right.

PRIMARY LAW UPHELD; WORKERS OPPOSE FOE

Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 16.—The State Federation of Labor and the four railroad brotherhoods urge workers to create a public sentiment against a bill that would repeal the State primary election law.

Advocates of repeal profess much interest in the "poor workingman," and claim he can not run for office. It is also claimed that the primary law "promotes factionalism, bitterness and strife."

"Our answer to these claims," say the trade unionists, "is that factionalism, bitterness and strife standing this State long before the primary system was adopted and the use of money in conventions was feared before the primary was thought of.

"The primary gives the people some way to express themselves. Under the convention plan, a few politicians got together in a room and settled among themselves who shall run and who shall not."

OUT-OF-WORK AGENCIES TOO OFTEN IN POLITICS

Washington, Feb. 16.—Public employment agencies should be taken out of politics and administered jointly by organized labor and employers, said Prof. John R. Commons of Wisconsin University, testifying before a sub-committee of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor.

Unorganized laborers would have no representative on the board, he said, since this would be impossible because of lack of organization. They would be looked out for, however, by the manufacturers, he said.

The educator declared that the Employment Service of the United States Department of Labor, as well as services of most of the states, is not under civil service, but that appointees are political and "incompetent."

Civil service examinations alone will not weed the fitness of a man to run an employment agency, said Prof. Commons. By permitting a board of representatives of organized labor and employers to orally examine candidates for employment service jobs, and to certify their fitness to the Department of Labor, the proper man would be selected, he said.

Prof. Commons declared that any system of Federal or State employment agencies must have the united support of organized labor and employers to succeed.

The witness favored unemployment insurance and expressed the opinion that this would induce employers to regularize employment and encourage the establishing free employment agencies.

MINE HORRORS GROW: OWNERS DODGE BLAME

Wheeling, W. Va., Feb. 16.—Explosions in non-union mines of this state continue to take their toll of workers who dare not protest against violation of mine safety laws.

County grand juries that are controlled by the companies shield the operators.

The recent explosion in McDowell county, in which six employes lost their lives, was blamed on the company by the coroner. This county official said the explosion was caused by gross negligence of State mine safety laws. He referred the matter to the grand jury, and that body, as usual, promptly placed the blame on one of the dead miners. Most of these accidents are caused by falls of roof and slate. This lack of proper timbering is less expensive to the operator, but means death to the mine worker.

The Wheeling Intelligencer declares that nine-tenths of the deaths and injuries to miners "could easily and inexpensively be prevented," and that the shameful record that West Virginia is making can not be exaggerated.

The newspaper calls on State authorities to end the slaughter of miners, and declares that "it is a flat violation of which "will be as certain and severe as is the punishment for taking of human life, or destroying human limb, in any other way."

WANT UNION CONTRACTS GIVEN LEGAL STATUS

Boston, Feb. 15.—Organized labor in the Massachusetts legislature to give union-shop contracts a legal status in this state. These contracts are recognized in many states, but Massachusetts courts consider them illegal.

UNIONIZATION URGED

Vancouver, British Columbia, Feb. 16.—The Milk Commission, created by the Provincial legislature, reports that the unionization of milk wagon drivers should be encouraged.

The commission made a study of the milk situation. It is the first time a government board has declared trade unionism is beneficial to the workers as well as to society.

STREET CAR MEN GAIN

Boston, Feb. 16.—A wage increase of 5c an hour was granted by the Middlesex & Boston Street Railway Company car men. The new rate is 60 cents an hour for one-man cars and 65 cents for busses.

HOSIERY STRIKE IS IN SECOND YEAR

Kenosha, Wis., Feb. 16.—The strike of hosiery workers against the Allen-A Company is in its second year, with these trade unionists as determined as when forced on the streets.

A speed-up demand and refusal to recognize collective bargaining caused the strike. The workers offered to post a bond of $25,000 which they would forfeit after a year's trial of their production policy, but the company is more interested in control of employes than in profits.

The strike has attracted nation-wide attention because of the futile efforts to break the strike. These workers have been enjoined, jailed and assaulted. Lewis W. Powell, district attorney, has defeated last November through his unfairness. It is charged that Powell spent $28,000 of the people's money last year to aid the company and that nearly one-third of this amount found its way into the pockets of strike-breakers imported into this city to "get something on" the unionists.

CHEAP-LABOR MINE IS FORCED TO CLOSE

LaSalle, Ill., Feb. 16.—The LaSalle County Carbon Coal Company will close its mines on March 1.

This concern protested against the Jacksonville agreement, and insisted that the United Mine Workers' "high" wage scale made it impossible to operate.

The company severed relations with organized employes, set up a lower wage scale and a company "union."

With every mine realized, the company is now forced to acknowledge its claim was untrue.

CHURCHMEN OPPOSE WORKERS' LOW WAGES

New York, Feb. 16.—Low wages is opposed by a committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ. The churches declare that the recent period of unemployment" forced mothers to leave their families to seek work in other communities. The churchmen declare:

"Employers, especially in highly competitive industries such as textile, should be warned against wages so low as to require the additional wage of the mother in the factory to maintain the home, and against encouraging mothers to leave their little children during the day. No mother should have to work away from home at night."

The clergymen defend the activity of the church in social questions.

"Such matters as a living wage, a shorter work day, housing for people with small incomes and protection of working mothers still seem, to great numbers of Christians, not a real part of the Christian task," it is stated.

"The churches have been slow to recognize the redemptive character of social work in the field of family welfare or take their functional part in it. Only a comparative few have worked systematically at the problem of the underfed home. This service has been taken over to a considerable extent by the physician, the lawyer, the social worker and the courts."

BRITISH LABOR PARTY WINS BY-ELECTIONS

New York, Feb. 16.—British labor is jubilant over recent successes in by-elections for members of the House of Commons, according to London press dispatches.

A by-election is held between regular elections. The latest contest by labor was its first success in South Battersea, a London suburb. Mrs. Hugh Dalton, whose husband is a member of Parliament, increased labor's majority of 2,918 five years ago, to 9,972. Her Liberal opponent lost 1,000 votes as against the last election and the Conservative candidate received barely 10 per cent of the total vote.

Unemployment and tragic conditions in the mining areas, coupled with the incompetency of the Conservative government, is driving voters into the Labor camp.

Some observers claim that while the Laborites will make unexpected gains in the general election, they will be held in the early summer, the Tories (Conservatives) and Liberals jointly will make it impossible for Labor to organize the government. The Laborites, however, declare they will sweep the country.

PENSION FOR JUDGES; SENATE IS LIBERAL

Washington, Feb. 19.—While federal employes urge Congress to vote a few additional dollars for their old age pension, after a life time of service, the Senate passed an old-age pension for federal judges in less than half an hour.

The bill provides that when a judge is 70 he will "receive the salary which is payable at the time of his resignation." He does not have to contribute a portion of his salary to his pension and need not be under penalty as judge 25 or 30 years, but only 10 years. These 10 years do not have to be continuous. If he were appointed when he was 40, served five years and resigned, and were again appointed when he was 65 and served until he reached the retirement age he is eligible for full-salary retirement.

MINE FIRM LOSES

Pittsburgh, Feb. 16.—The anti-union Pittsburgh Coal Company reports a net loss of $493,870 last year. This concern was one of the first to repudiate the United Mine Workers' Jacksonville agreement. Vast sums of money have been spent to import thousands of strikebreakers and to maintain gun men.

In 1927 the company reported a net loss of $1,880,596; in 1926, $2,114,676, and in 1925, $1,266,940.

Stockholders do not seem to object to these terrific losses to maintain feudalism.

STEREOTYPERS GAIN

Harrisburg, Pa., Feb. 16.—Stereotypers signed a two-year agreement with local newspapers. Substantial wage increases for journeymen and apprentices are provided.

COMPENSATION ACT ACCEPTED BY LABOR

Raleigh, N. C., Feb. 16.—Organized labor accepted a compromise compensation act, following their long campaign to place North Carolina among those States that have this legislation.

The compromise calls for a maximum of $18 a week, a minimum of $7 and $5,500 as the total award for death or permanent injury. An injured worker may get two weeks' medical, surgical and hospital care. The commission will be empowered to extend this period.

URGE DRY LAW REPEAL

Boston, Feb. 16.—By a vote of 26 to 6 the State Senate asked Congress to take action for the repeal of the prohibition amendment to the Constitution. The Senate represented the wishes of 26 of the 40 senatorial districts, as registered by a referendum at last November's election.

Madison, Wis., Feb. 16.—The Senate, by a vote of 17 to 15, passed a bill for a referendum whether the State prohibition enforcement act should be repealed and whether 2.75 beer in this State should be legalized.

COMPERS HONORED BY PORTO RICANS

San Juan, Porto Rico, Feb. 16.—Municipal officials throughout the island joined with organized labor in honoring the birthday anniversary of the late Samuel Gompers.

Several cities passed resolutions eulogizing the memory of the former A. F. of L. executive. Mayors and other officials attended meetings called by organized labor and assisted in delivering contributions to Gompers memorial that will be erected in Washington.

The most important assemblage was held in this city. Santiago Iglesias, member of the Porto Rican Senate and president of the Porto Rico Federation of Labor, made the principal address. He recounted the struggles and the philosophy of Mr. Gompers, with whom he associated more than 30 years.

Other speakers at every meeting referred to the efforts of the A. F. of L. to double the membership this year, and to the need of Porto Rican workers to affiliate to the trade union movement.

SCIENCE OUSTS SKILLED LABOR EVERY INDUSTRY IS CHANGING

Ambridge, Pa., Feb. 16.—"Machinery threatens to become so refined that it no longer needs so many people to run it, and is devouring those who brought it into being," said Secretary of Labor Davis, in a speech in this city.

The occasion was the groundbreaking ceremonies for a new plant being erected by A. M. Byers' Company to make iron by a process that dispenses with skilled iron puddlers.

The independence and creative ability of the iron puddler is gone, as this refiner of iron is supplanted by science.

"The displacing of workers by automatic machinery and new processes is a problem of first importance to the nation," said Secretary Davis.

"These wonderful new machines are capable of turning out an even greater volume of production, but who will buy the production be worth if we have not people enough to consume this larger product. If every man and woman who wants to work is not kept fully employed at good wages and furnished with ample buying power, our machines will go to smash. Our machines will be able to fill the stores and warehouses but idleness and low wages will be no one to buy these things. The market place will be overstocked with goods and empty of buyers."

The speaker cited instances where labor-displacing machinery and new processes is invading different industries and callings. The railroads, he said, are handling a greater volume of transportation with 350,000 fewer employes. Copper smelters have increased output with one-third less workers, and one machine in the glass industry replaces 700 workers.

"So it runs through every industry," said Secretary Davis. "Science and invention are getting out more products with fewer workers."

VICIOUS PROPOSAL CHECKED BY LABOR

Raleigh, N. C., Feb. 16.—Organized workers checked the passage of a bill which provides that mortgages shall be given preference over verdicts in injury cases.

This vicious proposal passed the State Senate and was favorably reported by a House Committee, but the workers secured its recommitment.

FIVE-DAY WEEK INJUNCTION IS SET ASIDE BY N. Y. JUDGE

New York, Feb. 16.—Supreme Court Justice Bijur annulled Justice Levy's temporary injunction against electrical contractors and employes adopting a five-day week. The agreement provides for a weekly rate of $67.20, instead of $66.

The injunction was issued at the request of the Building Trades Employes' Association, who claimed that by joining the association the electrical contractors come under a blanket agreement between the association and the New York Building Trades Council that wages and hours would be treated as a unit, and not by separate crafts.

The electrical contractors showed that when they joined the association they reserved the right to settle all disputes "with their own trades," and that the purpose of this reservation was to permit them to deal with their own employes.

Justice Bijur upheld the electrical contractors' interpretation of their reservation.

"I think it is clear that wages and hours of labor in the electrical trade constitute a trade question," said the court. "Moreover, I have not been appraised of any question other than wages and hours of labor which the electrical trades would care to reserve to itself."

The Building Trades Employers' Association were aided by Walter Gordon Merritt, attorney for employers in the Danbury hatters' case, and attorney for the League of Industrial Rights, formerly known as the Anti-Boycott Association. Merritt talks about appealing Justice Bijur's decision, as other building craftsmen are restless because of the electrical workers' success in negotiating a five-day week.

SHORTER WEEK FOR POSTAL EMPLOYES

Washington, Feb. 16.—Postal employes in the Railway Mail Service will work a 44-hour week, beginning July 1, 1929, if the Senate passes a bill reported favorably by the Post Office Committee.

The bill provides that the 44-hour week shall be established "as rapidly as practicable" and that no reduction in salaries shall be made.

IS JUSTICE BLIND? CAN'T JAIL MILLIONS

Washington, Feb. 16.—"If Colonel Stewart of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana deserves punishment, then he would be on his way to jail in short order," said Senator Norris in a Senate discussion of Stewart's connection with the Continental Trading Company. This concern was involved in the $3,000,000 scandal and Stewart refused to answer questions submitted by a Senate investigating committee. He was cited for contempt and was acquitted by a jury.

"It is pretty difficult, if not impossible, to convict a man of millions," said Senator Norris. "There is no doubt that if Stewart had been a man of lesser financial means he would have been behind the bars long ago."

No Senator denied the Norris charge and the statement was ignored by the press.

LETTER CARRIERS' WORK IS HIGHLY HAZARDOUS

Washington, Feb. 16.—Hazards of letter carriers are almost as great as those of coal miners, other post office employes combined, according to the United States Employes' Compensation Commission.

In the six months' period, January to June, last year, out of a total of 4,865 cases of injuries reported, embracing all postal employes, 2,347 of this number were city letter carriers. Out of a total of 36 deaths resulting from accidents to postal employes during 1927, 19 were carriers.